

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2010

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you in regard to the cleanup effort in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Now nearly two months into this catastrophe, the urgency and seriousness of the circumstances demand swift and unequivocal responses from our leaders. We must have all hands on deck and should not be turning away legitimate offers of help.

In this regard, we understand that the Administration has announced the issuance of guidance for obtaining Jones Act waivers for foreign vessels offering help in the cleanup efforts in the Gulf.

While this is an important step forward, we are still receiving troubling accounts of just such vessels, including skimmers, being turned away from lending their services to mitigate this unprecedented environmental emergency. The announcement from Admiral Allen indicates that thus far, no Jones Act waivers have been "required," but we are eager to ensure that such waivers are immediately available should they merely qualify as helpful to the response.

We ask for three simple clarifications. First, has there been any foreign vessel or service that has been made available for response efforts that has been denied such a role for any reason other than its particular function being unnecessary?

Second, will the Administration immediately commit to an expedited waiver system in which all potentially useful foreign vessels are presumed compliant and granted unless and until individually dismissed for either uselessness or detriment to the cleanup effort?

Finally, is the Administration taking any steps to not only advise but to solicit aid from international asset holders for purposes of this response, including publicizing the expedited waiver guidance documents in relevant seafaring nations and major port cities?

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we look forward to working together to address this tragedy in the Gulf region with all effective tools at our disposal and with all deliberate speed.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator

John Ensign

Jeff Flake

Mike Johanns

Liz Cheney

John Cornyn

Richard Shelby

Chuck Grassley

Greg Scott

Sally Chaudhry

Tom Cotton

Tim Wirth

Kit Peltola

Kay Bailey Hutchison